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and I find that it is more difficult to distinguish between forma *plumosa* and var. *plumulosum* than between the species and forma *plumosa*, at least if one accepts under the designation *plumulosum* only specimens with leaves little or not folded and this variety finds itself more limited and becomes nearly it seems to me, var. *contiguum*.

4.—Ninety-nine specimens belong to this group representing the var. *subjulaceum*. I have brought them under the var. *orthothecioides* but they are not identical with the type of Lindberg, being less robust, their leaves are more falciform, and form a hook at the end of the branches. To this last statement M. Cardot seems to take exception, writing in pencil "Pas la form *orthothecioides*." He further remarks "The extreme forms of var. *plumulosum* with leaves not plicate with stems radiculose.—*Hypnum Moseri* Kindb. and *Hypnum contiguum* Nees."

Winona, Minnesota.

NOTE.—The Department of Botany, under whose auspices the exploration here recorded was made, has for five years failed to publish this report, But even though some of the value is lost by delay, it is here published at the first opportunity afforded the writer.

ON COLLECTING MOSSES.

R. S. WILLIAMS.

[Read at the Meeting of the Sullivant Moss Society at Boston, Dec. 30, 1909.]

In working over a number of moss genera the past season and examining rather carefully all the specimens contained in the herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden, as well as in some private collections, it was rather surprising to find how few really first-class plants had been obtained of many even common species. It seems to be the ordinary impression that mosses are among the easiest of plants to collect, and in certain respects this is true, for they are mostly within reach, can be removed without difficulty from the substrata and take up but little room or weight; moreover they can be collected without the necessity of carrying a heavy press into the field, and if a little dry at night, can be softened up and made into about as fine specimens as if laid out and pressed immediately. Also if one wishes to pad out the numbers of their collection there is perhaps no easier way than to grab at everything in sight that looks a bit mossy, attach numbers and give to some one else to name (this last being very important);

a dozen such specimens can often be made and put away in as many minutes; if the plants are covered with mud, scorched up by the sun or overgrown by half a dozen other species so that it is somewhat doubtful just what the number relates to, all the better, apparently, from some points of view, for such conditions are surely apt to cause doubt in determining, even if they do not bring forth various quite new names.

Now, from these remarks, please do not think for a moment that the writer wishes to discourage in any way the collecting of mosses, but in looking over most large collections it is quite evident that the majority of specimens are in such poor shape that if the condition of the leaves, flowers and fruits was as readily seen as in the ordinary flowering plants, the merest tyro in collecting would have been apt to look about for better specimens to fairly represent the species and to preserve for future study.

By way of illustration I may mention that in looking over between seventy-five and one hundred specimens of *Dicranoweisia crispula* (all collected in Europe by the way), there were not, apparently, three specimens that had been obtained at just the proper time, namely, when the mature capsules were just beginning to open. The same conditions hold in various species of *Dicranum*. It was often necessary to examine dozens of specimens before finding one that was in any where near a perfect condition. It would appear that usually the first lot of specimens observed by the collector are the ones preserved, yet I think I am not overstating the case in saying that nine times out of ten the first obtained, even if fruiting, are apt to be either too old or too young, and not unfrequently one has to wait over two or three years in some regions to find a given species in the best shape, although it may fruit, or attempt to fruit, each year. Certainly it is always well, if time permits, to look about for more and better specimens, for mature fruit, for flowers, for fine sterile tufts of nearly anything and everything you may run across, and it will be found, often, not an easy but a rather difficult matter to get the best, although the prize, I believe, is always worth the trouble. Of course, when traveling, many specimens must be obtained "on the fly" or not at all, and these may be very valuable. So do not neglect such but be sure to always look for the best and an abundance of it when possible.

New York Botanical Garden.